HOUSING ELEMENT

Goal 1.0 - Assure the quality, safety, and livability of existing housing and the continued high quality of residential neighborhoods.

Inherent in the design and operation of the expanded facilities will be some noise impacts to surrounding residential uses. If unmitigated, this noise would negatively impact the livability of the surrounding residential setting. These impacts have been deemed, as part of the project Initial Study, to

be moderated to a less than significant level (with incorporation of mitigation measures). These noise measures associated with the design of the new activity center include maintaining:

- Fixed windows on the south side of the building and operable windows on the north, west, and east sides
- Automatically closing doors
- Venting of mechanical equipment on the north side of the building

In addition, the project was designed to shift the proposed new buildings as far from north and eastern Belmont residences as possible. The project was also designed to shift the new buildings as far possible from south and western residences (located in San Carlos) without significantly affecting the proposed circulation pattern for school. No adverse safety conditions have been identified in the project initial study that would result from construction of the proposed development.

Policy 1.5 - Preserve the unique environmental aspects of the community, including hillsides and other environmental amenities.

The proposed project (if approved) will be constructed within the existing parking and outdoor activity area (lower asphalt parking lot) for the site. The project has been designed to preserve open space along the perimeter areas of the upper sloped south and western portions of the property.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

Goal 3051.3 - To minimize the erosion of soil.

Should the project be approved, compliance with stormwater runoff/erosion control measures as required by the Belmont Public Works Department as mandated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board will be required.

Goal 3051.5 - As appropriate, to comply and encourage compliance with regulations designed to achieve state and federal air quality standards.

As described in the environmental study, the project will be required to meet Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) requirements in its design and operation. These standards are enacted to preserve clean air for the Bay Area region.

Goal 3051.6 - To provide for the efficient use of energy resources in activities carried out or regulated by the City.

Should the project be approved, the project will be required to meet the Uniform Building Code which includes provisions for compliance with *Title 24 – Energy Conservation* for new construction.

Goal 3051.8 - To protect scenic views to and from the hillsides.

The project is proposed for the relatively flat portions of the existing lower asphalt parking lot/play area. The project site is not located on a ridgeline and no significant scenic views are expected to be diminished as result of the project.

Policy 3052.1 - New development shall be located and designed to preserve specimen trees and significant stands of trees to the extent possible.

Existing trees and open space along the south and western open space areas along the perimeter of the school property will not be affected by the project. These existing open space areas would be augmented with additional landscape plantings to screen the proposed school facilities buildings from adjacent residential land uses.

Policy 3052.2 - The use of native and drought resistant vegetation should be encouraged in new landscaping.

A Preliminary Landscape plan for the project includes both native and drought resistant vegetation for the site. Landscape Plan review will be more formally addressed at the Detailed Development Plan stage of the Planned Development review for the project.

Policy 3052.4 - The City shall control both the amount and timing of grading to prevent accelerated erosion of the soil. Erosion and runoff control facilities shall be regularly maintained and preventative measures taken whenever possible.

Compliance with stormwater runoff/erosion control measures as required by the Belmont Public Works Department and mandated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board will be required for the project. These measures will include adherence to Best Management Practices (BMP's) in the design/construction of new buildings to address grading, erosion control, and storm water quality control for the proposed development.

Policy 3052.6 - In carrying out its functions, the City will comply and encourage compliance with all applicable federal and state air quality regulations.

The construction and operation of the school facilities expansion project will be required to meet Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) requirements; these standards are enacted to preserve clean air for Belmont and the surrounding Bay Area region.

Policy 3052.12 - Structures should be located and designed and landscaping designed and maintained to protect, to the extent possible, views to and from the hillsides.

The proposed activity center building is sited within a relatively flat area of the site (existing asphalt parking lot/play area) and as such, will not affect views to and from hillsides. The proposed project will not adversely affect community views from McDougal Park and from the front of the school (along

Solana Drive).

New landscaping is also proposed along the south and western slopes of the property to screen the proposed activity center from adjacent residential uses. The new landscape plantings within these areas are not expected to diminish existing views of significance as seen from the school, McDougal Park, or adjacent properties.

Policy 3052.13 - A right to plant trees on a property should be balanced with the right of a view from adjacent property.

As discussed above, new landscaping screening plantings are proposed along the south and western slopes of the property to mask the proposed activity center from adjacent residential uses. These plantings are not expected to diminish existing views of significance as seen from Solana Drive, and adjacent residential properties located south and west of the subject site.

NOISE ELEMENT

Goal – Promote a Balanced Community

Promote a noise environment that reflects a balance of the various City objectives while providing an environment that maintains a healthy living environment; fosters relaxation and recreation; is conducive to the work environment; and provides pleasant living conditions.

Policy 2.1 - Ensure that noise levels appropriate to protect the public health and well being are maintained.

A school is equal to other types of uses that are preferred within a balanced community. Schools are typically acknowledged as a compatible land use within residential neighborhoods. The Noise Element to the Belmont General Plan [1996] implies in figure 3, "Noise Compatibility Guidelines", "that schools, libraries and churches are generally acceptable in comparison with residential uses." Typical sounds from a school use include: human vocalization, traffic sounds, and refuse/recycling pick-up and landscape maintenance. Objectionable noise, generated from refuse/recycling pick-up and landscape maintenance for the school has been conditioned to occur after 6 AM so as to minimize negative neighborhood impacts. The project would not increase enrollment over the maximum level approved as part of the 2002 CUP (260 students maximum).

The project will formalize enclosed activity space for the school, which currently takes place either outdoors or within existing school buildings. Outdoor noise levels are expected to decrease with moving these activities indoors to the proposed activity center. Mitigation measures in the design and operation of the activity center are also required – these include 1) maintaining fixed windows on the south side of the building and operable windows on the north, west, and east sides, 2) automatically closing doors, and 3) venting of mechanical equipment on the north side of the building. These measures are designed to ensure that the school (and associated expansion thereof) would continue to operate within acceptable noise levels.

PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENTS

Goal 2062.1 – To provide recreation areas for community and neighborhood use, conveniently located and properly designed to serve the needs of the residents of the community.

The proposed project (and operation of the school campus) includes continued enforcement of a recorded agreement with the City for access to McDougal Park. The project does not entail establishment of additional areas within the campus for neighborhood or community recreation.

Goal 2062.2 - To cooperate with public and private organizations in developing facilities and programs for recreational activities.

Accessed via the project site, McDougal Park is used for organized games of the local youth soccer, softball leagues, and passive recreation. There are no enhancements to the current level of recreational activities that take place at McDougal Park proposed as part of the project.

Goal 2062.3 – To preserve and enhance existing parks, recreational areas and facilities to serve neighborhood and community needs to the maximum extent possible.

The existing park is City property and public access (on a part-time basis) to the park is preserved via the legal access agreement. No additional enhancements are proposed for the park as part of the proposed project.

Goal 2062.4 – To expand opportunities for active recreation in existing community parks.

This project does not propose to expand the recreational opportunities for McDougal Park.

Policy 2063.10 – The City should seek cooperative arrangements with private institutions, such as churches and schools, for public use of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities during times when they are presently unused.

The project does not include modification to the current access agreement for McDougal Park. The project also does not include a cooperative arrangement for public access to, and use of the proposed Activity Center building. It should be noted that previous neighborhood outreach feedback identified a concern that public use of the Activity Center might adversely impact the neighborhood.

Policy 2063.11 – To the extent possible, volunteer activity and private financial resources should be used in combination with public funds for acquisition, maintenance and operation of recreation facilities. In addition, the provision of private recreational facilities to serve the community should be encouraged.

A private recreational facility (activity center) is proposed; the project does not include community access to this facility.

OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Goal 2070.1 – To designate and protect open space lands for the preservation of scenic areas, views, trees, natural drainage channels and plant and wildlife habitats; for the managed production of natural resources; for outdoor recreation; for protection of historical and cultural resources; for public health and safety and for structuring urban development.

The CAS school site was previously developed with a 3.02-acre playfield; this field is now separated from the subject site, but is used as a neighborhood park and intended for open space and outdoor recreation.

Goal 2070.2 – To provide opportunities for the enjoyment of natural beauty, solitude and relief from the pressures of urban life.

Accessed via the subject site, McDougal Park is open to the neighborhood on a part-time basis as recreation space for community enjoyment. This goal was addressed with the City's purchase of the McDougal public school playfield and conversion to a neighborhood park in 1985.

Goal 2070.3 – To actively pursue all sources of funding to acquire open space lands.

The City agreed to purchase McDougal Playfield from the Belmont School District in 1985 to allow for creation of a neighborhood park.

Goal 2070.4 – To actively explore various methods including, but not limited to, regulation, full acquisition, transfer of development rights, and less than fee purchase for protecting open space resources.

The City purchased McDougal Playfield from the Belmont School District in 1985 thereby protecting a neighborhood open space resource.

Goal 2070.6 – To provide open space areas as separations between incompatible uses.

On the basis that schools should be located in reasonable proximity to residential suburban development, a school use is generally regarded as a compatible use within a residential area. Nevertheless, the project has been designed to preserve trees and open space along the south and western open space areas along the perimeter of the school property. Additional landscape plantings to screen the proposed school facilities buildings from adjacent residential land uses would also be added within these existing open space areas.

Policy 2071.1 – In any land development project, the basic visual character of the Planning Area

should be conserved through project design.

The basic visual character of the Planning Area (in this case the existing school and surrounding residential neighborhood) consists of a combination of one and two story structures (for the school) and one and two story residences within the surrounding neighborhood. This project would include construction of an activity center and an addition to the multi-purpose building with a similar development pattern.

Policy 2071.2 – All major visual features, such as ridgelines and steep valley sides, should be preserved through regulation or public acquisition of fee title or lesser interest.

The subject private school site does not have major visual features. As such, the project does include preservation of existing open space (hillside) areas within the south and western portions of the site.

Policy 2071.3 – Areas hazardous to the public safety and welfare should be retained as open space. Areas that fall into this category include:

a. Hillsides generally over 30% slope.

The project does not entail construction in any hillside areas of over 30% slope. The subject private school site is not hazardous to the public safety and welfare. The proposed areas of campus expansion are on relatively flat ground (within existing asphalt parking lot/play area).

Policy 2071.5 - A variety of vistas should be provided and preserved ranging from the small enclosed private views to the more distant views shared by many people.

The subject site is not located on a ridgeline but does provide for a variety of views to the distant hills. The proposed project would preserve the community views from McDougal Park and from the front of the school (along Solana Drive).

Policy 2071.7 – Landscaped open spaces should be included in new developments, especially in commercial areas and along streets and pathways.

While the project is not a new development, it includes landscaped areas along the perimeter of the campus and around the school structures. Final landscape plan design would be formally reviewed at the DDP stage of the project.

Policy 2071.8 – Measures should be taken to improve the visual quality and safety of pedestrian ways along roads.

The project plan includes student loading within the campus rather than along adjacent public roads. Existing school policies encourage carpooling, on site parking and student loading, and discouraging on street parking. Internal traffic/circulation mitigation measures, identified as part of the Initial Study, are

required for the project to not reduce the visual quality and safety of pedestrian ways along Solana Avenue sidewalks.

Policy 2071.12 – The City shall explore opportunities to obtain easements to establish a trail system linking residential areas to open space lands, schools, parks and commercial areas.

The project does not include creating trail easements within the CAS campus or the adjacent McDougal Park.

Policy 2071.16 – Open spaces should be provided as possible to separate incompatible uses, especially single family residential use from commercial and industrial uses.

At this time, the existing school has not been determined to be an incompatible use in relation to the surrounding residential neighborhood. The current private school is not classified as either a commercial or industrial use. In any case, open spaces were provided to separate the school structures from the residences when the school was initially developed. A landscape and open space buffer would remain around the campus that separates existing residences from the proposed school structures.

2072.4 <u>Open Space in Commercial, Industrial, Institutional and Mixed-Use Areas</u>. Open spaces in these areas provide space for off-street parking, places for employees, customers, and clients to relax and converse, and visual separation of uses. These open spaces are not necessarily beautiful, but with care in location and design, provide visual variety in the City's more intensively developed areas. Actions:

- a. Define open space requirements for commercial, industrial and institutional uses.
- b. Establish standards for landscaping of parking lots and rights-of-way in commercial, industrial and institutional areas.

The above actions are directed at the City. As for the project, the site layout for the CAS campus accommodates the school's parking, landscaping, and play areas. Within existing open space (south and west) areas of the campus, additional landscaping would be planted to screen the proposed school facilities expansion from adjacent residential land uses. The specific open space requirement for this institutional use will be determined at the time the Detailed Development Plan would be adopted for the project.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing analysis, staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Continue the review to a date certain in order to appropriately assess the material.

ACTION ALTERNATIVES

- 1. Adopt a resolution recommending City Council action regarding the Mitigated Negative Declaration.
- 1. Adopt a resolution with findings recommending City Council action regarding the zoning ordinance amendment for the site, and Conceptual Development Plan for the school.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Zoning Ordinance Section 12 (6 pages).
- 2. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, May 20, 2003 (5 pages).
- 3. Table of controlling Conditions of Approval (5 pages).
- 4. Campus Plan, September 26, 2003 and project application materials (73 pages), prepared by Charles Armstrong School.
- 5. Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration (35 pages), Addendum (10 pages) and Mitigation Monitoring Program (14 pages), prepared by Geier & Geier Consulting, Inc.
- 6. Neighborhood Letters in response to the Initial Study and for which the Addendum was written (59 pages).
- 7. Campus Plan Supplemental, February 17, 2004 (25 pages), prepared by Charles Armstrong School.
- 8. Response to Initial Study, September 4, 2004 (10 pages), prepared by Charles Armstrong School.
- 9. Arborist Report, April 2, 2003 (23 pages), prepared by Walter Levison. (map to the Commission only)
- 10. Arborist report, December 4, 2002 (38 pages), prepared by Barrie D. Coate and Associates
- 11. Geologic and Geotechnical Review, October 27, 2003 (3 pages), prepared by Cotton, Shires& Associates, Inc.
- 12. Geotechnical Report, February 26, 2003 (25 pages), prepared by Michelucci & Associates.
- 13. Campus Activities Charles Armstrong School (6 pages), prepared by city staff from information in the application and subsequent conversations.
- 14. Gymnasium Comparison Table (1 page)
- 15. Letters received between August 10 and November 9, 2004 (cover to follow).
- 16. Project Plans (for Commission Only).